THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): Guidelines have already been issued to all States|U.Ts. to open new fair price shops to provide easy physical access to consumers and to make necessary financial|physical arrangements for the improvement of infrastructural facilities such as storage and transportation of essential commodities to fair price shops especially in rural, backward, remote and inaccessible areas. The Central Government is also providing financial assistance to States|U.Ts. to strengthen their Public Distribution System under the following schemes:

(1) Assistance of States|U.Ts. in the North-Eastern Region and the States|U.Ts. of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim and Andaman & Nicobar Islands for setting up Civil Supplies Corporations and construction of godowns.

(2) Assistance to States for the purchase of mobile vans.

(3) Assistance to States|U.Ts. in the North-Eastern Region for supply of iodised salt and levy sugar in small packs.

The Central Government has also issued guidelines to all States|U.Ts. for including Public Distribution System as a new item of the Minimum Needs Programme in the 7th Plan from 1987-88 onwards.

Visit of Central Team to drought affected district of Maharashtra

2246. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the districts in Maharashtra which were visited by the Central team during 1986 to assess the drought siuation and the need for Central assistance; and

(b) the quantum of financial assistance released by Government as drought relief?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) The Central team visited the following districts in Maharashtra during December, 1986 to assess the drought situation and need for Central assistance:— (1) Thane, (2) Nasik, (3) Ahmednagar, (4) Pune, (5) Osmanabad, (6) Jalna, (7) Buldans, (8) Latur.

(b) A ceiling of expenditure of Rs. 36.27 crores including Rs. 12.29 crores for 1987-88 has been approved for drought relief to the State Government.

Kudremukh Iron Ore Project

2247. SHRI KALPNATH RAI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantities of iron ore produced by Kudremukh Iron Ore Project during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the steps being taken to increase the production of iron ore at Kudremukh; and

(c) the manner in which the iron ore extracted there is being utilised?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) The quantity of iron ore concentrate produced at the Kudremukh Iron Ore Project during the last three years was as follows :—

Year	Production (Million tonnes)
1984-85	1.61
1985-86	1.80
1986-87	3.46

(b) The entire production of the project is for exports. A vigorous marketing drive has been launched to locate over-